

Spotlight Session 2

Providing affordable and quality public services

at local level: how can multi-stakeholder partnerships help

31 January 2023, 12:00PM – 1:00PM EST

Organizers:

Lead Organizer: United Cities and Local Governments

Co-Organizer: Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments; Public Services International

Background:

Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) are vital in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in fostering partnership at the local level. Over the past years, through the multiple crises the world is facing, we have seen how local public service workers have been at the forefront of protecting people and the planet through the delivery of life-saving services. It has become self-evident that the equitable provision of quality local public services is rooted in collaboration, dialogue and partnerships for the public good.

The importance of partnerships for sustainable development goes beyond SDG17. This is especially the case when it comes to the equitable provision of quality local public services, which are essential to protect public health and the environment; enable inclusive socio-economic development; and are ultimately at the heart of SDG implementation. Local public services include education; health, care and social services; water, waste and sanitation; energy utilities; public transport; LRG policy and administration services; public and social housing; first responders and emergency services; and many more. Given the complexities and the many actors involved in the equitable and timely provision of local public services - including workers, service providers and community organisations – LRGs are uniquely positioned as key enablers of resilient local public services provision, and often directly oversee cooperation and partnerships to ensure quality services reach everyone, anywhere.

A just, swift and resilient post-Covid-19 recovery requires strengthening local public service provision, also in view to confront the intersecting crises our world faces. To do so, a strategic focus based on inter-governmental coordination; cooperation among key actors; as well as on social and institutional innovation are critical. It is also essential to reclaim adequate, sustainable public funding and staff up life-saving public services with workers in adequate numbers and decent conditions. Besides, devolving powers with funded mandates to frontline governments and institutions is also a prerequisite to enable them to act swiftly and effectively where needs and emergencies arise and to ensure equitable access to quality local services our communities, territories and cities need.

A resilient, inclusive and sustainable post-Covid-19 recovery can only go hand-in-hand with the delivery of public services that LRGs offer through their policy, service and frontline staff. This requires multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance in direct, continued touch with local needs and communities. Finally, if such recovery is to be effective, fair and resilient, the crucial role played by public service workers must be acknowledged and policy leaders need to ensure they are in decent working conditions by upholding their human and labour rights at all levels of government and across sectors; so they can serve their territories and communities at their best.

This Spotlight session organized by the Local Authorities Major Group, gathered within the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, in partnership with Public Services International as a representative of the Workers and Trade Unions Major Group. It will count on the participation of LRG representatives and their networks, public service worker representatives, as well as civil society partners from around the world.

The session will share concrete, innovative experiences and lessons learnt regarding the intrinsic links between empowered LRGs, strong local public services and workers in decent conditions and the achievement of the SDGs. It will also illustrate how quality public service provision can become more equitable, effective and sustainable through multi-level, multi-stakeholder governance and partnerships.

Objectives:

- Share experiences and takeaways from concrete cases of multi-level collaboration among LRGs, public service providers, workers and community in establishing innovative and solid partnerships to ensure an inclusive, resilient post-Covid19 recovery and achieve the SDGs, especially in the context of local public service provision.
- Illustrate the multi-dimensional aspects in the equitable provision of quality local public services and how they can contribute to localizing the SDGs, while strengthening of multi stakeholder collaborations and actions.
- Highlight the importance of ensuring strong local public service provision for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through innovative partnerships and strong, sustainable public funding mechanisms, management and social dialogue practices.

Guiding questions:

1. What is the role that partnerships can play in guaranteeing the delivery of vital local public services and in localizing the SDGs?
2. How can the efforts for achieving the SDGs be strengthened at sub-national level?
3. How can partnerships and social dialogue guarantee decent conditions and the health and safety of public service workers; and how can they promote more democratic environments?
4. What policy spaces need to be further opened and developed at the international level to ensure the meaningful participation of LRGs, workers and civil society representatives is mainstreamed? How do you imagine the multilateral system of the future?

Proposed format:

The event will be organized in hybrid format with a panel discussion and open dialogue among speakers and the public if time allows.

Draft Agenda:

- Opening Remarks by the facilitator (UCLG) (5 min)
- Panel Discussion
 - **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary General, UCLG (5 min)
 - **Dries Goedertier**, Policy Advisor, Care and Social Services, CGSP-ACOD, LRG union, Belgium (5 min)
 - **Jonan Fernandez**, Secretary General, Social Transition and 2030 Agenda, Basque Country (5 min)
 - **Eugenie Birch**, President, General Assembly of Partners (tbc) (5 min)
- Discussion and questions from the floor
- Closing remarks by **Rosa Pavanelli**, Secretary General (tbc), PSI (5 min)